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APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

A

REVIEW

OF THE

CLAIMS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH,

CONSIDERED AS AN

APOSTOLICAL INSTRUCTION,

AND ESPECIALLY AS

AN AUTHORISED INTERPRETER OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

[*From the Eclectic Review.*]



"From such Apostles, O ye Mitred heads

Preserve the Church,"

COWPER.



WILLIAM BUELL, PRINTER,
BROCKVILLE, U.C.

1840.

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P R E F A C E.

In these Provinces we are proud of our connexion with the Mother Country, we try to copy her example and imitate her liberal and enlightened Institutions. But at the same time there are those who would also engraft and keep up in this country what is by a majority of professing Christians in England considered and felt as an intolable grievance, namely, an Established Dominant Church. None can be ignorant of the efforts made by those who consider themselves as belonging to the Church of England, to have that Church established here, with an exclusive right to all the legal provisions made for a "Protestant Clergy." Hitherto the chief "strife and debate" has been for the "loaves and fishes" under the assumed sanction of the Provincial Constitutional Act; but of late this party has come out much more boldly, and are now urging their claims to "uninterrupted Apostolic succession," exclusive churchship and legitimate Priesthood, who are the Divinely authorised and only expositors of the word of God; with a confidence, boldness and arrogance, that is truly astounding. A concise refutation of such presumptuous and unscriptural claims is peculiarly necessary: and as these claims have been frequently urged and as often ably refuted on the other side of the Atlantic, it has been thought advisable to re-publish in pamphlet form the following able exposure, which appeared originally in the "Eclectic Review," for Nov. 1815, a work of long standing and great celebrity, and which still continues to be published in London. It was considered best to re-print the whole entire as it stands in the "Review." The reader will keep in mind that it was published nearly 25 years ago: some allusion is made to the "Test and Corporation Act," which then existed but has since been repealed. A careful examination of the arguments is recommended to all; and those who differ in opinion may refute them by more cogent reasoning if they can.

Brockville, April 27th, 1840.

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REVIEW, &c.

'Nempe hæc assidue.'—‘The Church is in danger!—This hideous outcry, which has so often stunned our ears, is again assailing them. From what class of persons does it proceed; and to what Church in jeopardy do they belong? Is it raised by a few obscure Dissenters, who cannot pass along to the place of worship in which they choose to assemble, but amid the hissings and hootings of a mob every individual of which boasts aloud that he was ‘brought up to the Church?’ No, truly, it is the cry of no such humble persons.

The Church which is in danger, is the Established Church of England, whose supreme head is the King’s Majesty, and whose guardians are, two Archbishops and twenty-four bishops, who ‘raise their mitred fronts in courts and parliaments,’ with annual incomes of from one thousand to twenty-five thousand pounds; a goodly multitude of deans, and canons, and prebendaries, and archdeacons; and upwards of ten thousand regular clergy. This Church so amply provided with protectors, cannot, we should imagine, be in danger through any inattention or neglect of these its ministers and guardians, who, doubtless, are always to be found, like watchmen, at their appointed stations.

It is not, we say, to be supposed, that the dangers of the Church are occasioned by any want of vigilence and care in those who are its ministers. Nor, so far as we have been able to make out the meaning of the clerical manifestoes which have come into our hands, can we learn, that the dangers of the Church are at all owing to the inefficiency of prayers and sermons, to the rarity of conversion in the Church, or the prevalence of formality in its members. There is not a single complaint of this kind in this whole pamphlet before us.

Proceed, however, from what causes, or be they of what kind they may, the dangers of the Church have awakened the concern of the present Author, who prescribes a remedy for them, which he is confident possesses the requisite

efficacy. But whether, like a skilful physician, he has first endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the disease before he attempts its cure, or, like some practitioners of another sort, who think it a matter of no moment to discover the aberrations of the corporeal system in a patient, he gives prescriptions which tend to strengthen the disease he engages to remove, will be manifest to our readers in the course of this article.

But to quit this style.—The pamphlet which we are now reviewing, is a wretched attempt to assert the pretended claims of an established priesthood to spiritual power—to fetter and enslave the consciences of mankind, and to reduce them to a state of mental imbecility and degradation. Men of the same spirit with the Author of this clerical manifesto, in the ardour of their zeal for the support of an external polity, seem to have lost every good feeling; the diffusion of Christian knowledge affords them no gratification; their hearts' desire, and the objects of their labours, are, the subversion of every religious community but their own—to seal the fountains of spiritual instructions—to bring under their ghostly control the entire population of the country, and to shut men up in the dungeons of ignorance and superstition. If they could reduce the people to the ranks of ecclesiastical subjection in which they think they should be placed, and secure their implicit deference to the hierarchy of the Church, they would rejoice as those who find great spoil. The perils of the Church would then cease; we should hear no more of her dangers; and the pens and tongues of her partisans would be at rest. It is not that the minds of the ignorant may be enlightened, that they may obtain the true knowledge of themselves, and may be acquainted with the rights, the expectations, and the duties of rational and immortal man, that these 'claims of the Church' are urged; but merely to procure their attendance within episcopal walls. This is the aim of the present Author. Has he the weakness to imagine that the lessons written in characters of blood, which we are daily reading in the faithful page of history, on the evils produced by clerical dominion, leave no impressions on our minds? Can he imagine that we are so insensible of the value of Christian freedom, as to feel the least inclination to put on the yoke of ecclesiastical slavery, or be at all disposed to suffer any attempt, on the part of others, to bring us under its bondage? The scriptures, in all their length and breadth, are the land of our inheritance, which we mean not either

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to alienate or to exchange for the formularies of a popish, or an established Church. The inhabitants of this country have received the Bible ; and they know too well the obligations resting upon them, to divest themselves of the right to examine it without external control, and to follow fully the convictions which their minds receive from its serious and diligent perusal. The circulation of scripture opposes a force against superstition, which the latter cannot overcome ; and by which it must be finally destroyed. Their line will go through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.

By a strange destiny, the clergy belonging to established Churches, uniformly promote the cause towards which they discover so hostile a spirit. They possess above most men the art of counteracting their own aims and efforts ; instead of enlarging, they diminish the number of adherents to their own Church, and give birth and stability to other congregations. The high and utterly unfounded pretensions of this Author, can have no other effect on minds not totally destitute of knowledge and reflection, than to fill them with inexpressible aversion to the system which he labours to uphold. His work bears the image and superscription of popery ; and if its Author be true to the principles which it develops, if he would maintain consistency, nothing remains for him but to make his peace with the 'Holy [Roman] Catholic Church,' by a confession of his schism, and a dutiful return to its communion.

The burden of this pamphlet is, that the Established Church of England possesses, by delegation from Christ and the Apostles, the sole and exclusive right of administering the ordinances of the Gospel—of giving validity and efficacy to its institutions—and of interpreting the Scriptures. Its ministers alone 'are duly authorized to offer terms of pardon and reconciliation to rebellious man, and to bring him into a covenant of grace and favour with his offended Maker.'—They only are fully empowered to make the sacramental elements valid pledges for the benefits they are intended to convey !—And the Established church itself, whose constitution is truly primitive and Apostolical, is the authorised Interpreter of the Holy Scripture.' A scheme of this kind is attempted to be put upon us by the most arrogant assumptions, the most evasive reasoning, the grossest sophistry, and the most palpable omission of important evidence. These clouds, and this thick darkness, do not make us fear and tremble ; they certainly are not of

that kind which indicates a present Deity. The ground is not holy; we therefore approach it without awe, and find it quite unnecessary to put off our shoes from our feet on the present occasion. We challenge the Author to prove his claims;—we challenge the whole established Hierarchy to shew us in the New Testament, the only standard of authority to which we bow, the model of any such church as theirs. Let them shew us the charter by which its diocesan bishops are incorporated, and its polity is prescribed. And we feel compelled to hold forth for the marked reprobation of our readers, that exclusive restriction of Divine grace to the offices and forms of the Established Church, which is here claimed on her behalf, as a sentiment completely popish, and an offence of the most scandalous nature against the Author of the Gospel. Bolder than Balaam, the abettors of such a tenet “ curse whom God hath not cursed, and defy whom the Lord has not defied.”—

We find here a great deal of unintelligible assertion about ‘the Church,’ and the ‘visible Church.’ We should really be obliged if such writers as the present Author, would employ language less vague and indeterminate, and distinctly inform us what they mean by the terms they use. Thus, when this pamphleteer asserts that the ‘Church is the authorized interpreter of Scripture,’ we should have been glad had he explained what he means by the ‘Church.’ The eighteenth Article defines the Church to be ‘A congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance.’ Now, does he mean to say that such ‘a congregation’ is the authorized interpreter of Holy Scripture? We do not wish to take him among Dissenters and Methodists, but allow him to find ‘a congregation of faithful men,’ upon consecrated ground. If this be the ‘Church,’ then, individual congregations are authorized interpreters of the Holy Scriptures. A congregation of faithful men cannot be the Church which, as an interpreter of Scripture, acts in ‘her collective capacity.’ When the Church, therefore, is said to act in her collective capacity as an authorized interpreter of Scripture, are we to understand the whole number of persons professing the established religion, clergy and laity, as constituting the Church? The laity, it is well known, have neither power nor voice in the Established Church. Are the Clergy then the Church? No: for the whole body of them cannot promulgate a single authoritative sentence relative to religion. The bishops

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and clergy have not the smallest degree of power to ordain a single article, or to make the least alteration in ecclesiastical ordinances; their whole combined energies are impotent. A royal mandate, or an act of Parliament, is omnipotent over all the ecclesiastics, high and low, of the established hierarchy. Where, then, is this Church? Is it really identified with the king and parliament, of this realm? So it would seem, for all that is done in the Church, is by their authority. 'These only have power to make or to unmake forms and rites of worship, and to authoritatively instruct and prescribe to the clergy what they are to believe,—in what manner and to whom the sacraments are to be given,—what prayers they are to offer up,—what doctrines to preach,—who are to be admitted to the episcopate, or priesthood, and who to be refused; by what ceremonies and prayers they are to be set apart and consecrated to their office.'* The Common Prayer Book itself was established by this authority, in *opposition* to the Bishops and the Clergy, in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Have we at last found our Author's 'Church,' which authoritatively interprets the Scripture?—Or, were the few persons who prepared the Liturgy in Edward the Sixth's time, or the few who revised it in Elizabeth's reign, 'the Church.' Or, by 'the Church' are we to understand nothing more than the paper and print which make up the Common Prayer Book? Where, or what, is this 'Church' which is authorized to interpret Holy Scripture? We have not yet, however, finished our inquiries on this subject. The Church of England had no existence before the early part of the sixteenth century. Previously to that period, the religious edifices of this country, and the clergy attached to them, were identified with the Church of Rome. Where then we should be glad to learn, was 'the Church'? Where, and what, was 'the Church' for many centuries before the Church of England was known? Must we look to Rome? Yes. There was 'the Church'; the members of the Romish hierarchy were the Church, and they claimed to be

* Towgood's "Dissent from the Church of England, fully justified." p. 9. Ed. 1804. This work we recommend to the serious perusal of Churchmen. If its statements be false, or its arguments powerless, they will be able to disprove them, and may then laugh at or pity the weakness of Dissenters. Let them read Towgood fairly, and follow out fully their convictions. We love truth and justice, and therefore strongly recommend the reading of "Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity" at the same time. Will Churchmen, and especially the clergy, recommend Towgood to their readers?

the authorised interpreters of Holy Scripture. To whose authority then are we to submit?

We shall return to this part of the subject, to which we are incidentally conducted in the course of our inquiry after 'the Church' of which the Author speaks, and for which he sets up so high a claim. This inquiry is the more necessary, since he asserts that 'the Church' is essentially a spiritual society, and that her alliance with the State is purely incidental. Incidental! Has the Church of England any independent subsistence? She derived her existence from the State, and is entirely supported by it. If at the period of the reformation in Henry the Eighth's reign, and in all subsequent periods, the State had never interfered with Religion, had never established nor endowed any particular creed,—where would have been the Church of England? Were the state now to discard her, and to endow and establish another sect, what would become of the pretensions of this Church? How many of her present members would, in such case, chaunt her eulogy? What would they themselves be? Would Dr. Kipling, Professor Marsh, and the British Critics, then be of the same Church with Mr. Simeon with the Author of the Velvet Cushion, and the Christian Observers? If the connexion of the Established Church with the State were dissolved, would these respective parties be found maintaining the same faith, and worship, and ordinances, and discipline? When the Author speaks of the Established Church in 'her spiritual, appropriate, and permanent character,' we ask—Where is she to be found, and of what materials is she composed? This simple question fixes him, like Prometheus, to the rock,—and where is the Hercules that shall deliver him?

Such a Church as this writer refers to, when he speaks of the whole Christian world being incorporated into one general society, and when he talks of the visible Church, is a phantom of the imagination, a chimera—a nothing. The New Testament never describes a Church after this manner. It may be a service to some of our readers if we place before them the scriptural meaning of the term Church; to the greater part of them it is indeed unnecessary; but they, we are persuaded, will permit us to furnish others with the means of distinguishing sound from sense.

The term *ekklesia*, it is well known, is derived from *ek-kalein*—*evocare, convocare*, to call out, to call together. It denotes primarily an assembly of any kind, as a meeting of the Athenian citizens for business, *katastases de ekklesias*,

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'a meeting being convened.' *Thucid. Lib. 1 sec. 31.* In this sense it occurs in the New Test. *Acts xix. 38. en te ennomo ekklesia,* "in a lawful assembly." In its sacred use, it denotes either the whole number of Christ's disciples considered as a body, of which he is the Head; or a particular society of persons assembled for Christian instruction worship, and discipline, without any consideration of the place in which they meet, which is a matter of complete indifference. The members of the Church, in the first of its sacred senses, are all who, in different ages, and in all countries, have been partakers of salvation, "a multitude which no man can number," and which cannot be the object of human cognizance. In its second and current acceptation, *ekklesia*, church, means an assembly of Christians. Thus we have *he ekklesia tou theou en Korintho*, "the Church of God at Corinth." *1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Cor. i. 1. he ekklesia he en hierosolumois*—"the Church at Jerusalem." *Acts viii, 1. xi. 22. he ekklesia Thessalonikeon*,—"the Church of the Thessalonians." *1 Thess. i. 1. 2. Thess. ii. 1.* When more congregations than one are spoken of, we find the plural *ekklesiae* invariably used. The phrase employed in that case, is "never the Church," but *the Churches*. Thus we have the Churches of Galatia—*hai ekklesiae tes Galatias. Gal. i. 2.* The churches of Macedonia,—*hai ekklesiae tes Makedonias. 2 Cor. viii. 1.* Never the Church of Galatia—the Church of Macedonia. 'The Church of England' has no prototype in the New Testament, to the writers of which national churches were unknown. We challenge the Author of this pamphlet to produce a single instance in the whole New Testament of the use of the term *ekklesia*, or church, corresponding to the phrase 'the Church of England.'

The term *episkopos*, (overseer) or bishop, is the talisman which performs marvellous things in the eyes of our Author. But does he imagine that we are so blind as not to perceive the essential difference between the bishops of the Church of England and the primitive *episkopoi*, or bishops, if that term be used, for we mean not to contend about words?—The bishop of primitive times was nothing more than the *presiding minister of one congregation*. Such a state of things as is presented by the ecclesiastical polity of the Established Church of England, in which a bishop has his diocese, and presides over *many congregations*, was altogether unknown to the Apostles, and to the Christians of their times, and equally unknown to the Christians of the

first two centuries. Such a phrase as the ‘bishops of the Church of England,’ in which the authority of a plurality of supreme officers having power over the presbyters of many congregations, is asserted, was never heard of by the primitive Christians. There was but one bishop to one church or congregation. This is clear to demonstration. The epistles of Ignatius, so precious in the eyes of an episcopalian, prove the point beyond controversy. ‘Your bishop,’ is the uniform language of Ignatius in his epistles to the respective churches which he addresses. Never does he exhort them to obey ‘the bishops.’ ‘If,’ says he, ‘the prayer of one or two be of great efficacy, much more efficacious must be the prayer of the bishop and the whole church. He therefore who does not come to the same place is proud.’* Again: ‘Wheresoever the bishop appears, there let the people be.’† A bishop having authority over the ministers of many congregations, or presiding over more congregations than one, is a species of church officer of whom Ignatius, and all preceding writers, were completely ignorant. What then does all the parade of this pamphleteer in his third, and his fourth chapters mean? He could only assimilate his own church to the model of the primitive church, as it regards its external form, by proving to us, from the New Testament, that such bishops as rule in the Established Church, presided in the Apostolical churches. Let him and his coadjutors clear their sight and trim their lamps, and sit down to an investigation of every passage in that volume, that they may, if possible, find there such a Church and such bishops as they would intrude upon us. Then as to the other officers of the Established Church, which we are to believe is ‘truly and purely apostolical,’ where are we to find *archbishop* and *dean*,—and *canon*, and *prebendary*,—and *vicar* and *stipendiary curate*? Were these known to the Apostles? If the Ephesian demon still range the earth, and be at any time called to order by the bearers of these titles, he might again say, we mean in relation to the se various appellations and offices, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?”‡

* Ad. Ephes. ch. v.

† Ad. Smyr. ch. vi.

‡ ‘We have our spiritual consistorial courts, decrees, and ceremonies, from them, (the Romanists.) We have our subordinate church-governments, our primates, prelates, archbishops and bishops, deans, prebendaries, canons and other dignities; provinces, dioceses, parishes; cathedrals and common churches; benefices, tithes, perquisites, Easter-dues, and free willing offerings.’ Speech of his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, in the House of Peers, April 21, 1812. His Royal Highness is

The prime sentiment of this work, is, that Christ deposited his authority exclusively with the Apostles, and that their commission involved a power of delegation. Such a sentiment it is endeavoured to make out from the words of our Lord—"As my Father sent me, even so send I you." Thus, by forced and miserable constructions of the Scriptures, are the high pretensions of arrogant ecclesiastics obtruded on the ignorant and superstitious. Christ was sent into the world to work miracles; so were the Apostles; let these their pretended followers give sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, and then they may, with some propriety, announce their claims. We shall quote the passage, and then leave every person who can distinguish A from B, to determine whether the words 'evidently denote the same power in the Apostles to transfer their authority to others.' "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.—And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." John xx. 21—23.

Is there a single word, or the remotest intimation, in this passage, of a power of delegation in the Apostles? Are not the whole scene and circumstances *special*? Have they an aspect towards any person or persons except the Apostles? Could it be believed, if the fact were not on record, that any man would be so presumptuous as to refer to such a passage as the above, in support of the transmission of spiritual authority by delegation from the Apostles? Such writers could not more outrage the Scriptures and the sense of mankind, were they to affirm that the title of Lord given to the bishops of the Established Church, and the thousands per annum which form their revenues, had descended to them as Apostolic legacies.

The power of delegation vested in the Apostles, according to this Author, was two-fold. 'Its first and most obvious exercise consisted in the appointment and ordination of persons to perform the functions of the Christian ministry.' p. 16. And we are referred to the appointment and ordination of deacons, and to the case of Paul and Barnabas ordaining elders in every city. *Acts vi. 1—7. xiv. 23.*—Most unfortunate references for this high churchman. In

quite correct in stating that these various articles are derived from the 'Church of Rome.' The word of God nowhere acknowledges them.

the former case—the appointment and ordination of deacons—the multitude, we are expressly told, were *called together* by the Apostles, and desired to look out *among themselves* for seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom they might appoint to the management of the funds appropriated for the supply of the widows. What was delegated here? Will our penetrating author prove that the seven were empowered on this occasion to ordain deacons as stated officers in the church, or that the deacons of the Established Church bear any resemblance to the seven? Let him again look at the passage, and then tell us whether deacons are thus ordained in the Established Church! Is the whole multitude called together on such occasions, and do they choose whom they will for that office? As to the other case, (*Acts xiv. 23.*) was Barnabas a bishop? Where do we read of his appointment to this high office? Or is the Apostle Paul ever called a bishop? These two men were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, whence they were sent at the instigation of the Holy Spirit, on a mission to the Gentiles, among whom they ordained elders in every church: but we are never informed that they *delegated* the power of Episcopal Ordination;—not a syllable is on record of their delegating any power whatever. We marvel much that such passages should be alleged as the ground on which is rested ‘an uninterrupted succession of persons regularly invested with the power of ordination, which is the chain that in all ages holds the church together, and connects its ministry with its divine head the only source of authority.’ O yes! ‘miserable were we,’ says another churchman, ‘if he that now sits archbishop of Canterbury, could not derive his succession from St. Austin; St. Austin from St. Gregory; and St. Gregory from St. Peter.’ ‘That my Lord of Canterbury that now is,’ says another, ‘is lineally descended from St. Peter in a most fair and constant tenor of succession, you shall easily find.’ We shall see in the sequel to what consequences this notion of ‘uninterrupted succession’ leads, in what a galling dilemma the present Author places himself and his Church.

The Constitution of the Christian Church, we are further informed, as established by the Apostles, is characterized by two grand fundamental principles. 1. That the ministers of that Church consists of three distinct orders, bishops presbyters or elders, and deacons; corresponding to the high priest, priests, and Levites in the Jewish Church.—

2. The origin of the church from the apostles, and the clear evidence of this origin found in the acts of the apostles, the commandments of Christ, the Levitical law, the prophecies, and the twenty-first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

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2. That the first order—that of bishops—is distinguished from the other two orders, by the powers of ordination and supreme church government. p. 19. That the Church was originally formed upon this model, is, this Author says, ‘clearly deducible from Scripture.’ *Deducible!* So then, this Church authority by which heaven and earth are to be bound, is something deducible!—Such a power is to be founded on inference! What! shall logic be called in to the aid of persons who assert that they bear the exclusive commission of Jesus Christ? ‘Reasonable to presume’—‘clearly deducible’—are not modes of speech fitting the special successors of Apostles, and the sole depositaries of saving grace. Where do we learn that the officers of the Christian church correspond to the high priest, priests, and Levites? According to this notion there should be only one bishop in the Church Established. Two archbishops, and twenty-four bishops are, to be sure, admirably represented by one high priest! Would it not be more appropriate to consider his holiness the pope, who is but one, as corresponding to the high priest? But, in true soberness of mind, is this imbecility of reasoning to lead our judgments captive?

He asserts that the appointment of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, by the Apostles, is to be found in the New Testament. Let us hear what he says. First, then, ‘The episcopal order resided in the Apostles, whose office, even before their entrance upon it, was denominated a bishopric. *Acts 1. 20.*’ p. 20. The words refer to Judas. Was he a Bishop? Did he ever ordain? Did he delegate his power? We are curious to know to whom he conveyed it.—We give him this bishop Judas. *Episkepe, Acts 1. 20.* clearly ought to be rendered ‘office’ or ‘charge,’ as it is in the margin of our bibles. We wonder that *Num. iv. 16* where *episkop* occurs in the Septuagint, has never been rendered “the bishoprick of the whole congregation.” The Apostles, it is further remarked ‘possessed not only authority over the whole church, but also individually governed the churches respectively planted by them, and ordained deacons and elders, over whom they exercised jurisdiction.’ p. 21. ‘John over the seven churches of Asia; Paul over the gentile churches of Rome, Corinth, &c.; Peter over the churches of the circumcision, or Jewish converts at Antioch, Bithynia, &c. of the dispersion; Matthew over the churches in Parthia; Andrew in Scythia; Bartholomew in India, &c.’ But where, we inquire, is the evidence of the above assumptions to be found? There is no proof in the

whole New Testament that any of the Apostles were bishops or exercised episcopal jurisdiction in any particular church. The Apostolic office was incompatible with an episcopal charge. The Apostles are never called bishops. No station was assigned to any of them as church governors.— Their office was to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature.— If, in the latter part of the lives of any of them, they were, through age and infirmities confined to one place, that place would naturally fall under the immediate inspection of such. And this, if even so much as this, is all that has given rise to the tradition, (for there is nothing like historical evidence in the case,) that any of them were bishops or pastors of particular churches. Nay, in some instances, it is plain, that the tradition has originated from this single circumstance, that the first pastors, in such a church, were appointed by such an Apostle. Hence it has arisen that the bishops of different churches have claimed (and, probably, with equal truth) to be the successors of the same Apostle.*

After a most impotent attempt to prove the Apostles to have been bishops, we are conducted to the grand climax of the whole argument, namely, that they delegated their authority, especially the power of ordination. p. 21. Our readers who study the New Testament in the simplicity of their hearts, and with humble prayer, seeking nothing more than a clear perception of its contents, and who have no interpreting Church to guide them, will be surprised to find that the consecration of a bishop is, *bona fide*, to be found in it. Yes—two instances of appointment of bishops by the Apostles themselves, are recorded in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul, who it seems, according to this Author, was bishop of Ephesus, and whose address to the elders at Miletus, is actually a charge to the clergy at the episcopal visitation, p. 29, (!!!) invested Timothy and Titus with the episcopal character. The former was appointed to the bishopric of Ephesus, the latter to the bishopric of Crete, p. 22. The proofs of Titus' consecration to the episcopal office, are the following:—He is charged to “rebuke with all authority,” and to “reject a man that was a

* Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I. p. 146. A work to which, on this whole subject, we particularly refer our readers. We are happy in learning that a new edition of this masterly performance is just published. It deserves the most careful study, as the clearest and best description of the rise of church power to which the student can be directed.

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heretic after the first and second admonition;" and he was expressly told that he had been left in Crete "to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city." These are proofs of Titus' formal installation as bishop of Crete! Admirable proofs! who can resist them? Timothy was most certainly an Evangelist, and so also was Titus; an office altogether extraordinary, and which was limited to the persons who first possessed it.—They were assistants to the Apostles, in bearing messages and in settling churches, and a fixed station was as incompatible with their duties as it was with the Apostolic office itself. The last quoted sentence clearly manifests that Titus was at Crete, not as fixed in any official capacity, but as intrusted with a particular business, the execution of which left him to return to the Apostle according to the exhortation, ch. iii. 12. "Be diligent to come unto me at Nicopolis." Titus was afterwards sent to Dalmatia, most probably for the same purposes which occasion his visit to Crete:—Was he also bishop of Dalmatia? The Apostle exhorts Timothy to *do the work of an Evangelist, not to discharge the office of a bishop.* The case of both Timothy and Titus is peculiar, and has no reference to any persons in following periods. They had no successors. Does the Author, in styling these men bishops of Ephesus and Crete, mean to impose on his readers the postscripts of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, in which they are so denominated? They are spurious and have no authority.

We affirm, in opposition to this writer, that the New Testament contains no proof of the existence of three orders of ministers, and that the whole stream of its evidence runs in another channel; namely, that it acknowledges only two classes of ministers—pastors and deacons; the former being styled indifferently *episkopoi*, or *presbuteroi*. In no part of the New Testament does the form—bishops, priests and deacons occur. It is impossible to account for this omission in the Epistles, if they existed as distinct orders at the time these Epistles were written. The Epistle to the Philippians would unquestionably, in that case, have been addressed to all the saints, with the bishops, priests, and deacons. The very same persons who are called elders (*presbuteroi*), *Acts xx. 17*, are addressed as bishops (*episkopoi*), v. 28. The Apostle Peter who assumes no higher title than presbyter, denominates the pastors of the respective churches to whom he writes—elders, (*presbuterous*), 1 Pet. v. 1; and in the second verse he exhorts the very

same persons to discharge the office of bishops, *episkopountes*.—Now this could not possibly be, on the supposition of this writer and other partisans of the hierarchy. No bishop in the Church of England would call those who are in priest's orders (or presbyters) bishops. He would not exhort *them* to discharge *episcopal* duties. Is a mere presbyter in the Established Church ever called a bishop? Elders or presbyters (*presbuteroi*) are called bishops (*episkopoi*) by the Apostle, which incontrovertibly proves identity of office, and the terms to be synonymous. Of the truth of this we shall furnish further proof.

The Apostle Paul, in giving directions to Timothy, respecting the supply of the churches, takes notice of only two classes of ministers—*episkopoi* and *presbuteroi*—bishops and deacons. If by bishops he meant the same as this high-church writer, it is utterly inconceivable that he should have omitted all reference to the presbyters, the stated pastors of the churches, at the time he is giving the most minute directions in relation to the deacons, an inferior order. Or, if it be said that by bishops he means presbyters, then it is equally surprising that he should have completely omitted all reference to the bishop's qualifications. The Epistle to the Phillipians is addressed—"To all the saints with the bishops and deacons." By bishops the Apostle evidently means the stated pastors of the Church at Phillippi. If there had been a superior with the title of bishop, it is passing strange that the Apostle should neglect him so completely. If there had been any such person as a bishop, with supreme powers of church government, it is utterly incredible that in the various Epistles addressed by Paul to different Christian Societies, not the least notice should be taken of such a dignified personage. The subterfuges and laboured sophisms which have been devised to elude the above arguments, can have no force against statements so clear, and reasoning so plain. We maintain with Campbell,* that one single passage from the Apostolical writings has not yet been produced, in which it appears from the context, that the two terms *presbuteros* and *episkopos*, elder and bishop—mean different offices.

The Angels of the Churches are mentioned in the book of the Revelation, and very satisfactory reasons, we are assured, have been assigned in proof of the term Angels meaning bishops. 'The emblem by which they are distin-

* Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 128.

guished, that of 'stars' bears a close analogy to the character of bishops, whose office it is to give light to the churches over which they preside.' p. 31. This is another admirable specimen of the very satisfactory reasons assigned in this pamphlet! 'The term "Angel" moreover is applied in the Revelation (ch. xxi. 5. 12, 14) to the twelve Apostles; and it may therefore be considered as applicable to bishops who are the successors of the Apostles, as governors of the church.' p. 31, 32. The force and beauty of this 'satisfactory reason' we leave for the appreciation of our readers. We cannot, however, find, that the Apostles are called 'Angels' in xxi. 12, 14. The writer describes a city whose wall was great and high, with twelve gates, at each of which an angel was stationed. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles. In asserting the claims of the Church, as an authorised interpreter of Scripture, he assures us that the New Testament contains many obscure passages which cannot be understood without the Church's aid. This we imagine must be one of them. An unknown measure of light is required to make out the difference between Angels and foundations!!

We are next referred to the early Fathers for satisfactory proof 'that the three distinct orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, were of the very essence of the Constitution of the Christian Church.' p. 39. The early Fathers are no authority to us. They were neither inspired nor appointed to supply any deficiencies in the New Testament, which is the only authority we acknowledge. Let us see, however what use he makes of them. The character which we have found belonging to his 'satisfactory evidence,' so far as we have accompanied him, induces strong suspicion, that the proofs yet to be produced, may be as weak and futile as those which have already occurred.

In Clement of Rome, allusion is made to the chief priest, the priests, and Levites, and the force of this allusion, it is said, depends on a presumed analogy between the Christian Church and the Jewish—the bishops, priests, and deacons of the former, corresponding to the high priest, priests, and Levites of the latter. Allusion and analogy are not very satisfactory where demonstration is promised and required!

The New Testament, we have already remarked, is entirely silent respecting any conformity of the Christian church to the Jewish. Is this analogy all that our Author could find in the epistle of Clemens relating to the subject of his

Investigation? How does it happen that this epistle is so slightly noticed? We shall endeavor to account for this haste in quitting this Apostolic Father. His testimony is decisive in favour of only two orders. The object of Clement in writing to the Corinthians, is to conciliate them to their pastors. 'It is,' he says, 'a thing most shameful to hear, that the Church of the Corinthians, should, by means of one or two persons be in opposition to its presbyters'—*'D' en e duo prosopα stasiazein pros tous presbiterous.'* ch. 47. Again: 'Let the flock of Christ be in peace with the presbyters that are set over it'—*'M' non to poimnion tou Chistou eireneuetō meta ton kathestamenou presbiteron.'* c 54. Again: 'Sub oit yourselves to your presbyters'—*'hupotage tois preshulerois.'* ch. 57. We read not a single syllable about the bishop: not the remotest intimation of any persons in the church superior to the presbyters. If there had been such a person as a bishop, invested with authority superior to the presbyters, in the church at Corinth, he would unquestionably have been mentioned on such an occasion; and there being no reference to such an office or person, is clear evidence that none such existed, affording a far better argument against three orders of clergy, than any supposed allusion to the high priest, priests, and Levites, can offer in their favour. In the 42d chapter of his epistle, Clemens enumerates the orders constituted in the church, and he mentions only two—bishops and deacons—*episkopoi kai diakonoi*; where it is plain that by bishops he means the same kind of persons as are called *presbiteroi*, presbyters or elders in the Acts, whom Paul and Barnabas ordained in every church. If a bishop had been appointed as the head of every church, with powers of supreme government, separate from both deacons and presbyters, and above them, Clement would certainly have told us that this was the case when he is distinctly informing us what the Apostles did for supplying the churches with ministers. There is no sanity in his writings if three distinct orders, bishops, priests, and deacons, were known to him as essential to the constitution of the Church.

We expected to find Polycarp next in the list of early Fathers; but being disappointed, we turned the leaf over, thinking that probably his testimony was misplaced in the enumeration. Polycarp we find is, however, actually omitted, and for the same reason, we presume, that Clement is so slightly noticed, and so unceremoniously dismissed. We shall endeavor to supply the defect. Polycarp, then, notices

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only two orders, presbyters and deacons. ‘Being subject,’ he says, ‘to the presbyters and deacons as unto God and Christ : *upotassomenous tois presbuterois kai diakonois hoi theo kai Christo.*’ *Polycarpi Epist. ad Philip.* ch. 5.—Would he, or could he, have written in this manner, if there had been a bishop in the Church at Phillipi known to him ? In exhorting them to be submissive to the presbyters as to God, does he not evidently affirm the office of presbyter to be the highest in the church ? In the fifth chapter of his epistle, Polycarp describes the duties of his deacons ; and in the sixth chapter, the duties of presbyters or elders ; but not a word does the whole epistle contain relative to the episcopal office. Polycarp knew of no Christian minister superior to the presbyters. The reason of passing by this early Father must be pretty evident.

Ignatius, however, is not omitted. He mentions three orders distinctly, bishops, priests and deacons. At the date of Ignatius’s epistle, the Apostles were all removed from the world, and the pastors of Christian societies were rising in importance and authority. The epistles of Ignatius remain, in our judgment, under the charge of interpolation, as they do in the opinion of the best and most impartial writers on ecclesiastical history. There is in them strong internal presumption of adulteration ; and it would, in our opinion be more in favor of this Father’s Christian reputation, to admit the charge than to maintain the whole of what pass as his writings, to be his genuine productions. Be they sound or corrupt, we shall lay before our readers a few extracts from them, as specimens of the spirit which dictated them, and leave to their decision how far they bear resemblance to the Apostolic manner which pervades the Epistles of the New Testament.

The unsailing scheme of Ignatius, is, subjection to the bishop : and in enforcing this, he makes use of terms which even rigid Episcopalians themselves acknowledge to be scarcely defensible. ‘It is good to regard God and the bishop. He that honors the bishop, shall be honored of God. He who does any thing without the bishop, ministers to the devil.’ *Epist. ad Smyr.* 9. ‘Attend to the bishop, that God may attend to you. My soul be pledged for theirs who submit to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons. May my part in God be with them.’ *Ad Polyc.* 6. ‘The more silent a man finds the bishop, the more let him reverence him. We should regard the bishop as we would the

Lord himself.' Ad Eph. 6. Here we have the blindest and most implicit submission enjoined.

The bishop's silence is a strange reason for his receiving more abundant honour. 'If,' says Campbell, 'like the Nazianzene monk, celebrated by Gregory, he should, in praise of God, devote his tongue to an inviolable taciturnity, he would be completely venerable. This, one would be tempted to think, originated from some opulent ecclesiastic, who was by far too great a man for preaching; at least, we may say it seems an oblique apology for those who have no objection to any thing implied in a bishopric, except the function. None whose notions of the duties of a bishop corresponded to Isaiah's idea of a watchmen, (lvi. 10.) would have thought dumbness a recommendation.'

Compare the language of Ignatius with that of Paul:— "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." "I beseech you by the mercies of God,"—"by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Compare it with that of Peter:—"The presbyters among you, I, their fellow-presbyter, exhort. Feed the flock of God amongst you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." This is the language of Apostles. How different from the inflated and lordly style ascribed to Ignatius! The Apostles never use such pompous epithets as *axiomakaristos*, *axiotheos*, which we find, in the epistles of Ignatius, applied to the church and to the bishop. While the Epistles of Paul, and of the other writers of the New Testament, shall be the acknowledged style of Christian Pastors, the minds of unprejudiced Christians will not fail to demur at the writings of Ignatius in their present state.

But Ignatius will avail our Author nothing, though every syllable of his epistles be allowed to be genuine. It is clear that the bishop described in them, was the presiding minister of a single congregation, not a church officer governing many congregations, and therefore quite different from the bishops of the Established Church. Ignatius exhorts the Magnesians to come together into the same place with their bishop and presbyters, for the common stated purposes of religion. He represents the bishop as being in the same place with the whole congregation. He requests the church at Philadelphia to choose some deacon whom they might send to the church at Antioch, in Syria, to be

present with them in their public assembly. The churches were, even in the days of Ignatius, in a state very different from the constitution of the Church of England. The Author of this pamphlet has not yet found a Church resembling his own. His *eureka* would be quite premature till, in his progress through ecclesiastical records and ages, he come to the glorious days of Constantine, when the pomp and circumstance of bishops displayed the glory of this world, and the corruptions of the church kept pace with the elevation of its ministers in wealth and splendour, and authority ; when pure Christianity was already overspread with those clouds of superstition, behind which, in the course of no very protracted period, as they became thicker and darker, it was to set. The Church of England may find its prototype in the Church to which Constantine was a nursing father ; but let not our understandings be insulted and history set at defiance, by attributing to it an Apostolical origin. Such partisans as this writer, should adopt the qualified language of the "Velvet Cushion," when speaking of the Established Church : 'Many of its prayers have descended to us from *almost* the first Christians.' An interval of two or three hundred years, may very decently be covered by *this* '*almost*' ;—a most unfortunate '*almost* !'

Though we have followed the Author into the early Fathers, we have no such opinion of them as to value their works above the writings of common men. Our object has been to expose his appeal to these authors as partial, and to demonstrate its total failure in the support of his pretensions. We discard all Fathers, Greek and Latin, earlier and later, from the seat of authority ; simply on this ground, that they are not the standard of either our faith or our practice. In respect to these we admit only the Sacred Scriptures. To them we pay profound homage.—Teach what they may, we receive their testimony with all readiness. They supply evidence, not to be evaded nor overcome, that no authority over men's consciences was delegated by the Apostles. They contain no record of any controlling power over the institutions of the Gospel, committed into the hands of any class of men. The design of Christianity is to convert and save men from sin, and to furnish them with holy principles of conduct. The means of accomplishing these great purposes, are not restricted to any particular ecclesiastical polity : indebted for their efficacy only to the blessing of God, they can derive no validity from any peculiar modification of church order. Not a

single declaration in any form does the whole New Testament contain, by which the propagation of divine truth, and the edification of the faithful, are associated with the orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church, has promised to be with all who shall meet together in his name, how few soever they may be in number. Love to Christ and to one another, is the bond of union among believers, whose stated voluntary association constitutes a church, who are fully competent to all external regulations necessary for their united order, and fully authorized by the obligations and promises of the Gospel, to promote its interests in the world. In every society it is requisite, that some of its members be appointed to preside; nor is it less evident that the right of appointment should be vested in its members. Though the Apostles were inspired and clothed with extraordinary authority, as the first and principal ministers of Christ, they appear uniformly to have recognised this right in the primitive Christians, as is manifest by the proceedings recorded in the first and the sixth chapter of the Acts, where we find the selection of persons to fill different offices, those of an associate to the Apostles and the seven usually styled deacons, made by the whole body of Christians assembled on the respective occasions. The name *bishop*, *episkopos*, was unquestionably appropriate to the stated pastors of Christian congregations, as expressive of the duties belonging to their office; they were "overseers," on whom the principal care of the Christian flocks rested. A church in modern times may be governed by bishops, and yet be essentially different from the primitive churches. Episcopilians lay much stress on the argument, that as the primitive pastors are called bishops, the Church of England is therefore Apostolical. It would be just as rational and convincing to maintain, that because the civil rulers of Spain and of England, are denominated kings, therefore, the government of Spain exactly resembles the British Constitution.

Episcopal writers, in opposing the claims of the Romish Church, never fail to employ arguments which have the sharpest edge against their own pretensions. The reasoning of Barrow against the papal supremacy, is equally satisfactory against the assumption of our Author, that the bishops of the Established Church are the successors of the Apostles, and have received from them by delegation, authority over Christians, and Christian institutions. 'For

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such a power (being of so great importance) it was needful that a commission from God, its Founder, should be granted in downright and perspicuous terms; that no man concerned in duty grounded thereon might have any doubt of it, or excuse for boggling at it—it is made the sole foundation of a duty incumbent on us; which we cannot heartily discharge without being assured of our obligation thereto, by clear revelation, or promulgation of God's will in the Holy Scripture; but apparently no such commission is extant in Scripture; the allegations for it being no wise clear nor probably expressive of any such authority granted by God; but, on the contrary, divers clearer testimonies are producible derogating from it.' *Barrow's Works*, vol. I. p. 561. Ed. 1722. A judge produces the commission by which he holds his office; a peace-officer can shew you his warrant:—but who can produce credentials to prove an Apostolical commission; Inquire for the commission which constitutes bishops successors to the Apostles, and invests them with delegated authority in that capacity, and you are sent in quest of it into some Dadalean maze, in which you may wander till the day of doom without finding it. You might as well go in search of an antediluvian cathedral.

Could we be allowed to indulge a hope, that this asserter of ecclesiastical claims, which we had hoped were well nigh obsolete, was an unaccredited expounder of the sentiments of the Church of England;—had we any reason to believe that even a majority of the clergy would agree in disowning the principles which this writer advocates; we should not deem it necessary to pursue any farther the mazes of controversy. Nothing would give us greater pleasure, than to receive from the hands of a dignitary of that Church, if such notice might be accorded to an anonymous author, a full exposure of the ignorance and bigotry on which these 'Claims' are founded. Had a publication equally offensive originated with a Dissenting minister, there would not have elapsed many weeks, before the publication would have drawn forth some general expression of depreciation. No consideration of expediency would have induced the ministers of any Dissenting sect, to pass over, in a member of their own body, a similar outrage upon the principles of the Gospel.

We know that among some good men, there exists a strong prejudice against every thing that assumes the shape of controversy. We do not speak of those who, resting in cold and unaffected generalities, resent every thing that

would disturb the unsubstantial repose of their convictions, and force them upon an inquiry into the truth of the sentiments they have adopted. There are some pious persons who appear to imagine that the necessity for *earnestly contending* for the faith, is past. Truth no longer requires, it should seem, or can no longer be served by, such defence. But either supposition is, surely, perfectly gratuitous.—Perhaps there never was a time, in which men maintained their principles with a laxer grasp, or in which they were in more danger of mistaking a superficial indifference, to the subordinate, but not unessential parts of Christianity, for genuine candour and an enlarged charity. A love of controversy may frequently originate in a secular spirit, and in the warmth of discussion good men have been too apt to forget, in their eagerness for the truth, the spirit of truth. But the agitation of controverted points can never be unsavourable to the interests of genuine piety. Truth is always elicited by the collision. The times of revival in the Christian Church, have always been marked by the conflict of debate, and it has not been found in the cases of the greatest and best of men, that a spirit of controversy was at variance with a spirit of elevated devotion, or with unfeigned benevolence. Christian charity is not an amalgamation principle: it requires neither a surrender of our most sacred rights, nor even a tacit compliance with unjust claims. It may be well for those who have no ground for complaint, to urge the uselessness of remonstrance on others, as a reason for their silence. Surely, when the duties and privileges of the members of the Church of Christ, are involved in the discussion, it does not become us to keep silence, either from a fear of giving offence, from the apprehension of breaking, by harshly sounding words, the spell on which the imaginary conciliation of parties depends, or from any apprehension of the fruitlessness of our labours.

Nothing can be more opposite to the whole tenor of the New Testament, nothing more unworthy of the character of its Author, than the presumptuous assertions of this episcopal writer. His declarations as contained in these pages,—for the tone in which they are delivered excludes them from every class of opinions,—directly contradict the statements of Divine truth, and limit the mercy of God, and all the benefits of his grace, within bounds, which are not of His appointment. The promises of God are, in no instance whatever, qualified by any description of place or of exter-

nal circumstances. The disposition of the persons towards whom they look, the state of the heart in man, are all that is matter of consideration. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy." "He that believes shall be saved." Names, and offices, and every thing which it is possible to include in the term church government, are uniformly excluded from the exhibition of salvation in the Gospel. Nothing more is necessary to constitute any man a disciple of Christ and to afford him the hope of heaven, than penitent reliance on his mediation, for acceptance with God, and obedience to the precepts of the Divine word:—nothing more is required to form an acceptable worshipper than to worship 'God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth.'

We find so proper a rebuke for such perverters of the right ways of the Lord, as the writer of this pamphlet, provided by the judicious and candid author of the "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," that we cannot do better than avail ourselves of his remarks on this subject.

"To me," says the excellent man, "to me nothing is more evident, than that the essence of Christianity, abstractedly considered, consists in the system of doctrines and duties by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the essence of the Christian character consists in the belief of the one, and the obedience of the other. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' says the Apostle, 'and thou shalt be saved.' Again speaking of Christ, he says, 'Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' The terms rendered sometimes believing and sometimes obeying, are commonly of so extensive signification, as to include both senses, and are therefore used interchangeably. Now nothing can be conceived more absurd in itself, or more contradictory to the declarations of Scripture, than to say that a man's belief, and obedience of the Gospel, however genuine the one, and however sincere the other, are of no significance, unless he has received his information of the Gospel, or been initiated into the Church, by a proper minister. This is placing the essence of religion, not in any thing internal and spiritual, not in what Christ and his Apostles placed it, something personal in regard to the disciple, and what is emphatically styled in the Scripture *the hidden man of the heart*; but in an exterior circumstance, a circumstance which in regard to him is merely accidental, a circumstance of which it may be impossible for him to be apprized. Yet into this absurdity those manifestly run, who make the truth of God's promises

depend on circumstantial, in point of order no where referred to, or mentioned in these promises; nay, I may say with justice, no where either explicitly declared, or implicitly suggested, in all the book of God.—I am no antiquary, and may not have either the knowledge or the capacity necessary for tracing the faint outlines of ancient establishments, and forms of government, for entering into dark and critical questions about the import of names and titles, or for examining the authenticity of endless genealogies, but I may have all the evidence that consciousness can give, that I thankfully receive the testimony of Christ, whom I believe, and love, and serve. If I cannot know this, the declarations of the Gospel are given me to no purpose: its promises are no better than riddles, and a rule of life is a dream. But if I may be conscious of this, and if the Christian religion be a revelation from heaven, I may have all the security which the veracity of God can give me, that I shall obtain eternal life.—He who believeth and is baptized, saith our Lord, shall be saved. You qualify his promise with the additional clause, ‘if he be baptized by a minister who has himself received baptism and ordination in such a particular manner.’ But where do you find this qualification specified? Scripture is silent. The spirit of God hath not given us the remotest hint of it; would it not then be wiser in you to follow the advice which Solomon hath given by the same spirit? ‘Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.’ Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who so boldly and avowedly presume to foist into God’s covenant articles of your own devising, neither expressed nor implied in his words? Do YOU venture, a worm of the earth? Can YOU think yourself warranted to stint what God hath not stinted and following the dictates of your contracted spirit, enviously to limit the bounty of the Universal Parent, that you may confine to a party what Christ hath freely published for the benefit of all? Is your eye evil, because he is good? Shall I then believe, that God, like deceitful man, speaketh equivocally, and with mental reservations? Shall I take his declaration in the extent wherein he hath expressly given it, or, as you, for your own malignant purpose, have new vamped and corrected it? “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” But as for you, who would thus pervert the plainest declarations of the oracles of truth, and instead of representing Christ as the author of a divine and spiritual religion, as the great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him

as the head of a faction, your party forsooth. I must say that I have stronger evidence that you have no mission, than all your traditions, and antiquities, and catalogues, will ever be able to surmount. For if ' he whom God sendeth, speaketh the words of God,' (and this is a test which Christ himself hath given us,) he that contradicteth God's words is not sent by him. This is alike the language of Scripture, and the language of common sense. Yours is neither."—*Campbell's Lectures*, vol. I. pp. 86—91.

All persons without the walls of an Episcopal church, be they the wisest, the holiest, and the most useful of men, are, by the writer of these 'Claims,' left to the uncovenanted mercies of God, if, indeed, so much can fairly be imputed to him. The excluding principle of his book, and the following passage, make it doubtful whether, in his apprehension, any persons in a country where episcopal ordination is attainable, can go to heaven from 'Conventicles.'

"On the interesting question—how far the ministerial labours are acceptable to God, and efficacious to those on whom they are bestowed, in situations where episcopal ordination cannot be had,—no opinion is meant to be here given, either expressly or by implication. This is a case in which it may be most appropriately said, 'Charity hopeth all things.' Clear, however, it is, that such ministerial labours have not the sanction of Apostolical authority. And no inference can be deduced from an allusion to a case which stands on the ground of necessity,—and which therefore may be safely left in the hands of that gracious being who accepteth a man 'according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not'—in favour of an unauthorized ministry, where episcopal ordination is attainable!" p. 56.

This paragraph we really think does look very much like a sentence of reprobation upon all regular dissentients from the Established Church. Baxter and Henry—Doddridge and Watts—Williams and Fuller—were all blind leaders of the blind. Their preaching had no tendency to save mankind; their prayers had no efficacy; their communion with their flocks in the ordinances of religion, had no spiritual unction; their ministry was as the sin of witchcraft, and the scenes of their labours were a vineyard on which God had commanded 'the clouds that they should rain no rain upon it':—all for want of episcopal ordination!

Were the principles and spirit of this writer likely to obtain general currency in the National Church, we should not hesitate one moment in raising a more righteous alarm

than that which the 'dangers of the Church' have excited in some of its partisans. We should address to all that fear God within her limits, the words once spoken by "a voice from heaven"—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." As it is, we address our appeal to every pious Churchman, whether that spirit which, for any reasons short of sin and impenitence, shuts men out from heaven, and excludes from the covenant of mercy those whose repentance is unfeigned, whose faith is sincere and whose obedience to Christ is unreserved and constant, —can be of God. What would episcopal ordination have imparted to such a minister as Doddridge? The sanctity of his principles, the validity of his ministrations, the usefulness of his labours, and the glory which awaited his retirement from the world in which he had lived only for its amendment, could have received no accession from the hands of bishops.

'Intaminatis, fulget honoribus!'

Can any statement be more gross than that which is so prominent in this pamphlet, that all persons ordained by a bishop, in the Established Church are, *ipso facto*, made true ministers of Christ? Can any thing make them ministers of Christ, who are utter strangers to his grace, void of Christian knowledge, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," profane, caring for no man's soul, and the companions of the unholy? who make a gain of godliness, and enter the Church from the most degrading motives, that they may be supported by its revenues, while there exists within them a radical aversion to the function which they assume? On what numbers of this description have episcopal hands been laid! How many may even now be found within the 'purely spiritual and Apostolical Church'? Are these, we ask, the true ministers of Christ! these the persons 'duly authorized to bring man into a covenant of grace with his offended maker,' who are themselves enemies to God by wicked works? Can the mere repeating of a form of a prayer, and the hearless reading of a hurried sermon, manifest the presence, and ensure the grace of God to the attendants in a parish Church, because these men have been episcopally ordained? No inconsiderable number of such persons remain, after the hands of a bishop have been laid upon them, 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' and go forth into the stations which money, or political influence, or family connexions, have

procured for them in the Church, only to counteract the tendencies of the Gospel, with the principles of which their whole lives are at variance, and to aid the triumphs of infidels and wicked men : as Judas, after he had received the sop, went out to finish his sin, in the betraying of Christ. What does episcopal ordination convey ? Does it convey genius, or talents, or piety, or wisdom, or spiritual gifts of any description, or aptness to teach ? What are the advantages of episcopal ordination ? Is it not passing strange, that we should be bidden to look at men, as the successors of the Apostles, who admit into the ministry persons destitute of Christian knowledge, uninfluenced by Christian principles, profane in their conversation, and notorious for the worldliness of their spirit and the levity of their manners ? And is it less amazing that these persons should come as authorized ministers to congregations who never sent for them, who do not even desire them. These true ministers of Christ !—and Doddridge and Watts imposters ! The former approved by Apostles, and the latter frowned upon and rejected by them !—Could we have the decision of Apostles between these parties—but a higher determination than even theirs will shortly decide this question.

The following passage is exactly in the manner of the popish writers, and presents the very same arguments which they urge on behalf of their church, as the authorized interpreter of Holy Scripture.

"The right interpretation of Scripture is attended with so much difficulty, that the attentive reader is often ready to cry out, with the Ethiopian treasurer, 'how can I understand unless some man guide me ?' Indeed we are expressly told, by inspiration itself, that in the Holy Scriptures are contained "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." The *hard* things here alluded to, relate chiefly to matters of doctrine, which it has pleased God to reveal in such a manner, that the interpretation of the passages in which they are contained is often a very difficult task. These passages, moreover, independently of the difficulty attending their interpretation, are so interspersed throughout the sacred volume that it is beyond the reach of ordinary capacities to trace their relative bearings and connexion, by comparing "spiritual thing with spiritual;" an operation, however, which must be performed in order to deduce from them a system of Doctrine, in harmony with Scripture ; some of those

doctrines are necessarily involved in mystery, and, therefore, reading the parts of Scripture in which they are contained, the assistance of an interpreter is necessary to guard against the danger of erroneous interpretation. Happily, in a matter of such high importance, we are not left to depend upon our own efforts. An interpreter is at hand to assist us in understanding the difficult parts of Scripture. A church has been instituted, to be an expositer of Holy Writ." pp. 57—60.

Again,

"The Bible is indisputably the word of God himself; but it has pleased God so to give his word, that to preserve it from erroneous interpretation, the aid of an interpreter is often necessary. If the mere perusal of the Bible was sufficient for its comprehension, so great an advantage being placed within the reach of every one, might generate spiritual pride."* p. 70.

Who would imagine that this language proceeds from a Protestant, and that the Church instituted to be an expositor of Holy Writ, is the Established Church of England? Who would not suppose that these complaints of the difficulty of understanding the Scriptures, and this demand of submission to the 'Church,' were from the pen of a Roman Catholic priest?—Where is this 'interpreter at hand' to whom we may apply for satisfaction in such cases?

All the Author's pompous parade about an interpreter of Scripture, conducts us to the circumstance, that the Established Church adopts, 'Three Creeds' and 'Thirty-Nine Articles,' 'to guard the pure faith from adulteration'† p. 104. So, then, this authority of the Church, as an interpreter of Scripture, resolves itself at last into the 'Apostle's

* "The end of the word of God is to save, and, therefore, we term it the word of life. The way for all men to be saved, is by the knowledge of that truth which the word hath taught: and sith eternal life is a thing of itself communicable unto all, it behoveth that the word of God, the necessary mean thererunto, be so likewise." 'Wherefore the word of life hath been always a treasure, though precious, yet easy as well to attain as to find; lest any man desirous of life should perish through the difficulty of the way.' *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* b. v. 21. How admirably do the Doctors of the Established Church harmonize! Their object however is the same, the exaltation of the Church. Hooker's remarks were directed against the Puritans, who maintained that frequent preaching was superior, as a means of religion, to the reading of the lessons from the Scriptures in the liturgy.

† Q. How was 'the pure faith preserved from adulteration' before these Creeds and Articles were in existence? *Rev.*

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Creed,' (a composition of uncertain origin,) 'the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed ;' together with the Thirty-nine Articles inserted in the Book of Common Prayer by authority of Queen Elizabeth. But whence did Queen Elizabeth derive her authority to institute articles of religion, and to interpret the Bible ? Were not these "three creeds" previously the property of the Holy Catholic Church of Rome, making a part of her formularies long before the Established Church of England was in being ; and have they less authority or virtue in the former Church than in the latter ? We are earnest for direct answers to these questions ; let us be informed distinctly where—and what—is the Church which is authorized to interpret Scripture.

'The Church,' says this author, 'by its articles, explains its doctrines on fundamental points in terms so clear and explicit, as to be susceptible of no latitude of construction—as to leave no room for difference of opinion—to bar the door against controversy,' and that 'no controversy upon fundamental points can possibly arise between those who conscientiously subscribe the articles of our Church.' p. 105.

A most manifestly false statement ! a statement as wide of truth as the east is distant from the west, and made in direct opposition to the strongest evidence ! Is it fact that these articles leave no room for difference of opinion ?—Is it fact, that no controversy can possibly arise upon fundamental points, among those who conscientiously subscribe the Articles ? Every honest mind must directly answer in the negative.

To pass by other articles of faith, the doctrine of justification is a fundamental point in all Protestant formularies, and it is so represented by writers of the Church of England. Are the national clergy agreed on this point ? Is there no difference of opinion on this 'fundamental' subject, between Professor Marsh, Dr. Kipling, and their party, on the one hand, and Mr. Overton, Mr. Simeon, and their adherents on the other ? Are not these respective persons and parties in direct opposition, and are they not denouncing each other as enemies of the Church ? The sentiments of Dr. Kipling, the Dean of Peterborough, are the sentiments of a large proportion of the national clergy. What do the Christian observers say of them ? 'Dr. Kipling would probably maintain, that his own works exhibit the sentiments of the Church of England. If so,—if the doctrines of the Church of England are to be identified with those of the

learned Dean, then Mr. Lingard will have no difficulty in proving them to be innovations on the views not only of the Apostles, but of the Reformers.* Again : 'Is the palpable and pernicious heresy of many of the sons of the establishment to be overlooked ? Does the writer know nothing of Dr. Paley, Mr. Fellowes, or, among the *theologi minorum gentium*, of Drs. Kipling and Croft, the Anti-Jacobin Reviewers, British Critics, &c. &c.?† On the other side thus speak the British Critics,‡ of the party whose cause and sentiments are advocated by the Christian Observer. 'We think that we shall have no great difficulty in shewing that these opinions are in direct hostility to the clear and explicit language of the Church of England.'—'The language of our Church, and that of Mr. Simeon, are plainly opposed to each other.' The Bishop of Lincoln maintains, that 'baptism duly administered confers justification ;§ in which doctrine Professor Marsh, Dr. Kipling, and the British Critics, agree with the Bishop. This tenet Mr. Simeon describes as follows :—'This doctrine may, I think, be fitly called the doctrine of extreme sprinkling, as being the counterpart of the popish doctrine of extreme unction, and like it the fruitful source of sin, of impenitence and of everlasting misery to the souls of men.'|| Professor Marsh thus takes Mr. Simeon and his party to task. 'Here Sir, I beg leave to ask you by what authority modern divines of the Church of England apply the term "Regeneration" in a different sense from that in which it is applied in our Liturgy and Articles ?'¶ 'It remains,' says the British Critics, ** 'for Mr. Simeon to explain how, as a minister of our Church, he acts consistently with his engagements to her, when he declares that regeneration neither is, nor can be the same with baptism.' And they remark in the conclusion of the same critique,—'For the able exposure of those errors, of which Mr. Simeon is the champion, Dr. Marsh has our best thanks ; they are dangerous errors ; and if they prevail to the extent which Mr. Simeon represents, it is high time to resist their progress.'††—What admirable

* Christian Observer, June, 1815. p. 407.

† Christian Observer, July, 1806. p. 433.

‡ British Critic for March, 1814. p. 270.

§ Refut. of Calv. p. 147.

|| Simeon's Address. p. 26.

¶ Marsh's Second Letter, p. 14.

** British Critic for March, 1814.

†† These interrogations addressed to the evangelical clergy by their opponents in the Church, demand, we think, their solemn attention.—

harmony ! What an exemplification of the simplicity that is in Christ ! What an excellent illustration of the Author's assertion, (p. 71.) that 'attached to the Church by the most imperious of all wants, that of rightly understanding the Scriptures, its members become attached to one another.' "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."!

'As an interpreter of the Bible, as an authorized teacher and instructor, the Church becomes the genuine source of Christian love and charity—thus keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' p. 72.

'Beyond the pale of Episcopacy all is uncertainty and confusion.'—'The Episcopal Church continues to shine forth with clear and steady light.' p. 49.

These sentences are specimens of the manner which pervades this work, and demonstrates the matchless effrontery of its Author. He who can send forth such legends of the Church, is totally disqualified for all sober writing, and his testimony carries in its front its own condemnation.

We have here a large proportion of the clerical members of the Church, including bishops and other dignitaries, branded as the abettors of pernicious doctrine, and charged with supporting sentiments which are 'the fruitful source of sin, of impenitence, and of everlasting misery to the souls of men.' And we have only to look on the other side to find the accusing party stigmatized in the same way. Another authority is still wanted—another interpreter is still necessary, to settle the meaning of the Liturgy and Articles, and to awe the contentions of the Established clergy into silence ! The bishops of the Established Church can afford no assistance in this matter, for their testimony also

They have given their 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing' in the formularies of the Church. Do not these formularies identify regeneration with baptism, and make baptism necessary to salvation? By what self-delusion are they led to maintain in their publications, that 'regeneration neither is, nor can be, baptism,' directly in the face of their own liturgy. What the Scriptures teach, is one thing, and what the formularies of the Church of England teach, is another. The latter is the standard by which all clergymen must examine themselves and their doctrine. They solemnly subscribe, without reserve or explanation, to the whole of them. If the Evangelical Clergy in their hearts believe according to their teaching, that 'regeneration neither is, nor can be baptism,' they can have no business at the fonts and altars of the Establishment. On this point Dr. Marsh is the true Churchman ; he is consistent with the doctrine of his Church in asserting—'regeneration and baptism to be the same thing.' Whether he be consistent with the New Testament, is another, and a very different question.

is not agreed. The Apostles were all of one mind on fundamental points, and it must appear perfectly amazing, that they who were so careful to delegate the 'due administration of the sacraments,' should not have provided for the support of the true faith, by transmitting to their successors the bishops, the faculty of agreeing to speak the same thing. How this happened we cannot pretend to say, but to us it seems quite as important, that the Successors of the Apostles should convey the very same religious principles that their predecessors received from Jesus Christ, as it is that they should be invested with the power of ordaining, and confirming, and consecrating church-yards. Who shall be the umpire between Mr. Simpson and Professor Marsh,—the Bishop of Lincoln, or the Bishop of Gloucester? Who shall decide between the *Christian Observers* and the British Critics? Will they submit themselves to the same arbitrators? And who shall pronounce judgment between Mr. Fellowes and Dr. Hawker,—the Bishop of St. David's or the Bishop of Landaff? From this jarring and confusion whither must we look for composing and over-ruling agents in the Church? Are we, for the true import of the unsettled standards, to turn from these combatants, from the Margaret Professor with his auxiliaries, and the opposite champions with their supporters, to the King and Parliament of this united realm, who established the Church and prescribed the formularies? This, we fear, would be a hopeless application:—the Church, therefore, must continue to exhibit the spectacle of a house divided against itself. And how can such a Church be proposed as an authorized guide?*

* Nor is there any more unanimity of sentiment now, (in 1840,) than there was at the time this work was first published. For, in addition to the division of the Church into "evangelical" and "unevangelical," which distinction has continued to the present time, there has recently arisen a controversy in the Church between the adherents of the Reformers and a party, now very formidable, who are striving to overthrow the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation, and to introduce Popery, or something equivalent in their stead. This party commenced its efforts in 1833, and is headed by the Rev. J. H. Newman, B. D. Fellow of Oriel College, and Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, the University Church; Dr. Pusey, regius professor of Hebrew, and canon of Christ's Church, from whom their adherents are sometimes called Puseyites, and the Rev. Dr. Keble, also Fellow of Oriel, professor of Poetry, and Vicar of Hursley, Hants. They and their coadjutors are generally known by the name of the "Oxford Tract Divines," which they have acquired from the circumstance of their disseminating their doctrines principally through the medium of Tracts, and other printed publications. So much for the unity of the Church of England. *Pub. Pamph.*

The Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, and as they are intended for all men without restriction, every person is fully authorized to examine them for himself. It is at his own peril if he submit his conscience to the dictation of popes or councils, of bishops or Churches. The sense of the Scriptures is to be ascertained only by diligent study accompanied with devout prayer; but to "search" for this is equally the duty and the unalienable right of all. The New Testament contains not the remotest intimation of an authority delegated to any Church, or to any persons to interpret the Scriptures for others. It is as silent on such a point, as it is on the Act of settlement, or any other act of the British Parliament. It is with consummate audacity that any men arrogate to themselves, or claim on the behalf of others, such authority. We know it to be an inseparable adjunct of popery, to demand the submission of the understanding and of conscience to the authority of the Church; but such a part in the avowed member of a Protestant community, excites peculiar indignation.

The following sentence would have received from us its merited portion of reprobation, did we not feel convinced that its simple insertion in our pages, would suffice for its exposure, and excite the just indignation of our readers.

'Though by thus confiding in such a Church, he should in some respects be led into error, he would be free from responsibility for that error.' p. 126.

Can Popery itself go beyond this?—

In the sixth chapter, the anonymous author of this pamphlet considers the question of Separation. On this topic he maintains principles completely subversive of his own Church. He is forced into a situation of such extreme peril that no assistance can avail for his deliverance. Popery is the only element in which such a spirit can live.

The Church from which separation is unlawful, must, he maintains, be an Apostolic Church, the distinguishing feature of which is apostolical succession.

'An uninterrupted succession of persons regularly invested with the power of ordination, is the chain which, in all ages, holds the Church together.' p. 17.

'The point of discipline involves the very being and existence of a Church, considered as an Apostolical institution.' p. 76.

'The constitution of the Christian Church is characterized by two grand fundamental principles—"three orders of

clergy, and the superiority of bishops as the Successors of the Apostles,'" p. 19.

'Those laws are therefore the essentials of ecclesiastical discipline. Where they prevail, there, and there alone, is Apostolical authority; there, and there alone, may the functions of the Christian priesthood be exercised. From a church so constituted separation cannot be justified on the ground of discipline; for such separation would be a renunciation of Apostolical authority.' p. 77.

'In order to justify separation from an Established Church, there must exist some difference with regard to the essentials, either of faith or discipline.' p. 82.

'Subordinate difficulties do not justify separation.'

These are his statements, and let him, if it be possible, justify his own separation from the Church of Rome, and vindicate his own church from schism. The Church of Rome is, by his own shewing, an Apostolical Church possessing Apostolical authority and laws. Her bishops are the successors of the Apostles.—If Churchmen deny this, they must immediately renounce the pretensions of their Church, the character of whose bishop is directly lost.—But they allow, nay, they strenuously insist, that the church of Rome, possesses the succession; and they also grant that she is in possession of the essentials of faith. Even the Christian Observers admit that '*the whole of Christianity was actually contained in the Romish religion.*' As the Church of Rome is thus acknowledged to be an Apostolical Church, possessing the essentials of discipline and faith, separation from her communion is not justifiable on the Author's own principles. He cannot justify his separation on the ground of discipline. He cannot justify his separation on the ground of faith. He is a convicted schismatic! an unjustifiable separatist! a renouncer of Apostolical authority! Thus do Churchmen of our Author's principles deprive themselves of every defence in their contests with the Romanists. So long as the clergy of the Established Church take their stand on the principles maintained in this work, so long will their separation from the Church of Rome be incapable of a just defence.

Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?—Jesus Christ declares it cannot. Certain Churchmen, it should seem, declare it can. They subscribe to the Homilies, as containing a 'godly and wholesome doctrine,' in which the church of Rome is denominated a 'harlot,'—'a foul, filthy, old withered harlot, the foulest and filthiest that ever has been.'—

Yet from this 'filthy harlot' the bishops and clergy of the establishment derive their spiritual descent. Again; The Homilies declare that the Church of Rome 'is so far from the nature of the true Church, that nothing can be more.' And if this be 'godly doctrine,' as every clergymen solemnly declares, what becomes of Apostolical Succession, and derivation of orders from the Church of Rome.

The Established Church of England had no existence till the sixteenth century; so recent is her origin. For many ages previous to that era, the whole clergy of England composed part of the church of Rome, under the headship of the pope. They were much at ease under his ghostly control, and were as much against innovation and change as the Established clergy now can be. When Henry the Eighth commanded all his subjects to acknowledge him as the head of the Church, to which he certainly had not succeeded by Apostolical descent or title, the clergy rebelled, and were grievously punished for their temerity. They were inimical to the Reformation, and it was not till they found all resistance to Henry's power to be in vain, that they submitted to his pleasure, and were modelled according to his will, which dictated the plan of the Church of England. After Henry's death, we find the Church of England in King Edward's time. But where are we to look for her in the reign of Edward's successor, Mary? It vanished! All the acts of Henry and Edward were repealed. The Protestant Bishops were all deprived. The daughter of Henry gave back the ecclesiastical supremacy of England to the pope, from whom her father had taken it away. The mass book superseded the Common Prayer, and the clergy became popish. This was the state of things at Elizabeth's ascension, who, if she had so pleased, could have continued it. She, however, was otherwise inclined, and making herself the head of the Church, instead of the pope, she changed the religion of the nation, and established the Church of England.*

* The author of the "Velvet Cushion" has shewn a little dexterity of management in the circumstance of the said Cushion's first appearance. Had it been made but a few years earlier, it might in the detail of events have related the change of the national clergy from Popery to Protestantism in Henry the Eighth's time, from Protestantism to Popery again in Mary's, and from Popery again to Protestantism in Elizabeth's. All these changes would have afforded admirable materials for narrative to so eloquent a cushion. Had it been older, only by thirty years, we might have been entertained with its tales of those times.

The clergy would not take a single step towards the accomplishment of the Queen's project. They wished for no alterations. They resisted the supremacy of Elizabeth, as an outrage on the Church, and bishops and clergy opposed the settlement of the present Establishment. When the Queen appointed Parker to the archbishopric of Canterbury, the whole bench of bishops refused to consecrate him. Not one of them would take any part in this business. The persons who consecrated Parker, were not bishops at that time. They had been deprived, and, consequently, had no episcopal authority. So precarious did Parker's consecration appear, that at so distant a date as eight years afterwards, an act was passed asserting its validity. But if Parker's consecration was not valid in itself at the time it was performed, could an act of parliament, seven years afterwards, make it valid? Elizabeth deprived the bishops whom she found in the Church, and their episcopal character ceased. In like manner had the episcopal character departed from the bishops whom Mary deposed. For, if it was right in Elizabeth to put down bishops, and take from them their episcopal character and rights, it could not be wrong in Mary to do precisely the same thing. Was not Mary as much the Sovereign of England as Elizabeth? If the latter could deprive bishops, so could the former; and if Mary could deprive, what becomes of Parker's consecration, the root of all subsequent episcopacy in England? The Romanists declare that the bishops of the Church of England are not possessed of Apostolical authority, having lost all pretensions to it by their separation from the true Church. They assure us that this high qualification never flows in the polluted channels of a schismatical Church, and as they are the original proprietors of this precious virtue, since it can be derived from them only, they must be allowed to know to whom it has been conveyed, and from whom it has been withheld.

Nothing can be more truly absurd, than to speak of the bishops of the Church of England, as the Successors of the Apostles. Queen Elizabeth might, with as much propriety be called the Successor of Jesus Christ, for she was invested with the sole power of making bishops. One would naturally suppose that, as frequently as a vacancy occurred in their sacred body, the Successors of the Apostles would look out for some holy man, whom they might associate to themselves, and appoint to the vacant Office. But the bishops of the Church of England have just as little to do with

procuring and electing their colleagues and successors, as we Reviewers have. This business is in other hands. No sooner does a bishop die, or is he put out of his bishopric, (as Atterbury and others were,) than the minister of the day, or some duke, or noble lord, or great political personage, makes a representation to the royal power on behalf of some brother, or cousin, or tutor, or political partisan; and it is done: all that follows is mere form. The man is henceforth a bishop. The whole bench of bishops cannot make their number fewer or larger, but the king and parliament can; as Henry the Eighth made an addition of six to the number of the Apostles' Successors. The whole body of the clergy cannot choose whom they will for bishop: they have as little power to make bishops, as we have to make popes. To what purpose, then, are we told, in this pamphlet, that the Apostles appointed bishops, if it be not to present us the greatest possible contrast, and effectually to convince us that the Church of England, whose bishops are all appointed by the civil magistrate, bears no resemblance, in the most important part of its constitution, to the Church of Christ?

A fair shew of liberality is made in various parts of this work; but, notwithstanding the author's apparent condemnation of persecution, what can be said of the introduction of the anecdote, p. 100? Dr. Johnson's remark, that—'If any one attempts to teach them (the vulgar) doctrines contrary to what the state approves, the magistrate may, and ought to restrain him,'—is represented as a warning voice remarkably applicable to the case under consideration; namely, the education of the poor in the principles of the National Church. Is not this directly to approve of persecution, and to suggest its adoption? Would the author strongly object to the employing of persecution for the service of the Church?

In a note (p. 85) we have another of this author's palpable misrepresentations.

'The Established Church, it ought to be remembered, has been deprived of nearly one third, of its legitimate property, now in the hands of lay impropriators.'

If he had said the 'Popish Church,' he would have been correct in the tenor of his statement, though not as it regards the extent of the deprivations. For, instead of losing a third she has lost all. The Established church has lost nothing, but has obtained much through the munificence of the king and parliament. But for their donations,

she would have been as poor as any Church. This churchman manifests his gratitude to the state, for the emoluments which it has bestowed upon his Church, in a very admirable manner—by charging it with fraud and spoliation.—The complaints of the Catholics are much better founded, when they say—The money and lands which our ancestors bequeathed to the Holy Catholic Church, for the support of masses for the repose of their souls, have been unjustly appropriated towards the support of an Establishment unknown in their day.

'It is often necessary,' our author tells us, 'to allot the service of several churches to the same minister, in order to ensure him the necessities of life.' p. 84.

He does not, we suppose, allude to such a case as A. B. being Rector of C. with £1000 per annum; Vicar of D. with £600 per annum; and Canon of E. with £500. Nor to F. G.'s being Bishop of L. and Dean of S. P. with a united income of £18,000 or £20,000 per annum. He should have told in what circumstances the necessity originates. That the fact is as he states it, we by no means dispute; but are not the possessions of the Church an ample provision for all its ministers? It is, verily, a complete specimen of an Apostolical Church, that the Establishment presents,—bishops, clothed in purple and fine linen, living in palaces and at their ease, on ten, or twenty, or five and twenty thousand pounds a year, and constant preachers supplying two or three parishes for the means of subsistence equal to that of a day labourer! The writer has some reason, we must acknowledge, founded on these facts, for saying—'These are evils of the greatest magnitude, and fraught with the most direful consequences.' We do not perceive however, the propriety of his application to the Legislature for an increase of wealth to the Church. The Church is rich enough already. It would be a better method of correcting the evil than that which he proposes, if the Legislature would effect a less glaring disproportion in the incomes of the clergy, and if the rule—'No paternoster no pence,'—were rigidly observed; or, in the words of the Author,—'that they should be allowed the full benefit of the sacred rule—"The labourer is worthy of his hire." Let this rule be put in practice and what a proportion of the clergy must be dismissed! For our part, we belong to a different school, in which no lessons were ever given for the endowment of Christian Churches by civil legislatures. The primitive and Apostolic plan of supporting religion was by the volun-

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tary donations of Christians. The art of 'forcing men to provide the means,' as our quondam acquaintance "the Velvet Cushion" expresses it, was not then found out, nor in contemplation.

A vast deal of importance is attached, in this pamphlet, (p. 88) to the reading of the Liturgy, as the means of salvation. Nor is this a notion peculiar to the present author. Through the influence of the formularies of the Church, Mr. Cunningham informs us, the dead may be said to walk. It is certainly possible for gentlemen of this order, to know the state of more churches than we do. We are, however, acquainted with not a few, in which the Liturgy is very punctually read, little more, we believe, being done in them for the saving of men; but no symptoms of life discover themselves in the dead which they receive: in some cases, they are like the bones in the valley of vision, very many, and very dry. To all such idle declamation on the reading of the Liturgy, it will be sufficient to oppose the testimony of, we have reason to believe one of the most pious, most venerable, and on this subject, best informed ministers in the Church of England. 'During my whole life I have heard of only *three* instances of persons converted to God by attending to the Church of England, in places where the Gospel has not been preached, and I trust I should not exaggerate, were I to say that I have known three thousand instances where it has.'*

'The allegation, that the Gospel is not preached in the Churches of the Establishment, involves at once,' says the Author of "the Claims" a mischievous fallacy and a gross mis-statement. p. 87.

These, however, his sophistry cannot substantiate. If Mr. Simeon preaches the Gospel, Dr. Marsh does not preach the Gospel. If Dr. Marsh preaches the Gospel, the Vicar of Harrow does not preach the Gospel. If the evangelical clergy preach the Gospel, their opponents do not preach the Gospel. If the latter preach the Gospel, the former do not preach the Gospel. The sentiments which are conveyed in the discourses of the Established clergy, are so various and so completely opposite, that no proposition in Euclid admits of clearer demonstration, than the allegation against which the present Author shoots his pointless arrows.

'If,' he remarks, 'the system of preaching in the Churches of the Establishment, accord with the visitatorial exhorta-

* Christian Observer, 1805, p. 593.

tations given to the clergy in the form of episcopal charges then, it is apprehended, it may truly be said that the Gospel is preached in the Established Church.' p. 90.

But if, in many instances, it does not so accord, will it not follow that the Gospel is not preached in many churches of the Establishment? That this is the fact, the hostility manifested in more than one episcopal charge, against a certain class of preachers in the Church of England, affords conclusive evidence.

The concluding part of the pamphlet relates to the general education of the poor, and is devoted to a recommendation of Dr. Bell's system, and the *soi disant* 'national society.' It would seem, that with all the wealth, and patronage, and influence of this nation at command, for upwards of two hundred years, the clergy of the Establishment saw the generations of men succeed one another, without giving themselves any concern about the general education of the poor. When Dr. Bell first published his book, in 1797 describing and recommending the adoption of the Madras system, the clergy suffered him to retire into obscurity, and for several years treated his book and his system with neglect. It was not till the Lancasterian schools were propagating themselves in all directions, that the clergy, as a body, took any thought about educating the poor. Then, jealousy and fear supplied the place of better feelings. Dr. Marsh preached—Dr. Bell was sought out—"The National Society" was formed—and the Church became suddenly zealous for diffusing knowledge through the country.—These facts are all on record and they speak volumes.

The tendency of this pamphlet is, to bring the Established Church, both as to its spirit and its constitution, into direct comparison with the church of Christ, as described in the New Testament. This effect, we hope, it will produce. We shall, in conclusion, advert to some few additional particulars of great moment, which will assist in judging of its approximation to the Apostolical model.

That in the primitive times the people possessed a large share of the direct power and influence in the proceedings of the Church, is clear beyond controversy, from the many instances to which we had occasion to refer, in the former part of this article. The people were "to look out among themselves," for persons whom the Apostles should set apart to office in the Church. "The whole Church" (including its ministers and private members) sent messengers to Antioch, with their judgment on important questions.—

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(Acts xv. 22.) That the discipline of the Church was exercised by its members, clearly appears from the Epistles ; and the most unimpeachable documents of ecclesiastical antiquity testify, that in the election of ministers, and in all the proceedings of churches, the people were direct parties down to the close of the third century. But in the Church of England, the people have absolutely no power. They are not permitted to choose their own ministers, but must receive, in that capacity, persons of whom they have no knowledge, and whom they not unfrequently discover to be utterly destitute of qualifications for the office. How often does it occur, that even a profane person succeeds to the possession of a parish church, as its appropriate minister ? Can the mode of supplying the Established Church with ministers, when seriously examined, appear in accordance with that of the New Testament ? Can it even be reconciled with reason ? In the Church of England, infidels may appoint Christian pastors. Many livings are matter-of-course provisions for the younger branches of great families : and it is far from being a rare thing to find advowsons and next presentations advertised for sale in the public papers. Are these things the evident tokens of an Apostolic institution ?

But further :—The Lord's Supper is surely an ordinance of a purely spiritual nature. Appointed by our Lord as a solemn memorial of his death, nothing secular can possibly belong to it. In this light, in the Apostolical Church, the Communion of the Lord's Table was always sacredly observed. But in the Church of England, how awful the contrast ! The symbols of our Lord's sufferings, are given to infidels and to profligates ; and the institution is made a political test,—a mode of qualifying for civil office !—How would the Pastors of the Primitive Church have revolted with holy indignation at such a profanation of Christ's institute ! Rather than administer it to the denier of their Saviour's mission, or to men notorious for impiety, they would have borne the loss of all things, or offered themselves as martyrs, to the flames ! Can a Church, in which so shameful, so awful a profanation of religious ordinances is practiced, be a true Church ?

The Church of England is essentially distinguishable from the Church of Christ, by its mode of treating offenders. Excommunication, in the Church of Christ, is an act of a Christian Society, excluding an unworthy member from all further participation in its privileges, and from all

further communion with its members. It is a purely spiritual instrument, affecting the spiritual interests only of the offender, and leaving her secular condition unchanged; his property, his civil capacities, and relations, remain in the same state. The Church follows him only with her prayers and her tears. But in the church of England, excommunication is a dreadful instrument of temporal vengeance: it affects the unhappy object of its severity in all his civil relations. He cannot serve upon juries, cannot be a witness in any court, cannot recover by process of law either lands or money,* and, to complete the terror, if at the end of forty days he does not make satisfaction, a writ issues out against him: the sheriff is empowered to take the unhappy person, and to imprison him in the county gaol, where he may continue till death come to his relief. This is the excommunication of the Church of England! To identify such a Church with the primitive and Apostolical Church, would be most palpable injustice.

But further: In the church of England, ecclesiastical censures may be remitted for money. Was it so at Corinth in the Apostles' time? Would the Apostles have received money as the price of release from the censures of the Church?

Once more: As to the Popish form of absolution, adopted by the church of England in her 'Order for the Visitation of the Sick':—in this form the priest is directed to pronounce, "By His (our Lord Jesus Christ's) authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins."

That this is not a mere form, or a simple conditional declaration, in the estimation of at least a large proportion of the clergy, may be gathered from Bishop Horsley's language in his Sermon on Matthew, xvi. 18, 19. Speaking of 'the power of the remission and retention of sins, conferred by our Lord, after his resurrection, upon the Apostles in general, and transmitted through them to the perpetual succession of the priesthood,' the Bishop adds: 'This is the discretionary power lodged in the Priesthood, of dispensing the sacraments, and of granting to the penitent, and refusing to the obdurate, the benefit and comfort of absolution. It was exercised by the Apostles in many striking instances: it is exercised now by *every priest*, when he administers or withholds the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, or, upon just grounds, pronounces, or refuses to pronounce, upon an individual, the sentence of absolution.' (Horseley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 286.)

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The same form of absolution was pronounced by Bishop Kenn over Charles the Second, who though he had lived in the most infamous manner—was a finished debauchee—and died impenitent, expressing no sense of sorrow for his past life, was absolved from all his sins by his spiritual attendant.* ‘When men see you claiming from God high and awful powers, which they are sure God has never given you, and hear you with great solemnity authoritatively absolving a profligate sinner in his name, when, at the same time, they know he never gave you any authority so to do, how natural is it for them to deride the priestly character, on which these impious claims are founded, and to treat your other offices with disrespect.’ *Towgood*, p. 48.

Finally: Man is an accountable being, responsible to God, his Creator and Judge, for all his opinions, as well as for all his actions. This responsibility directly invests him with the perfect right of judging for himself on all points of religion; nor is it in the power of sophistry to confute or to obscure this simple principle. The right of private judgment, inseparable from man as a religious and moral being, is the same in every country, under every modification of political circumstances, and under every species of civil government. It cannot, therefore, belong to any man to prescribe to another in matters of religion; for if every man must judge for himself, no other can judge for him. It is a duty, as well as a right, which he cannot devolve upon another. This is the state of responsibility in which the Creator has placed all his creatures, the only state which comports with their rational nature; and it is to men, as the subjects of this responsibility, that Revelation addresses its testimony, and submits its claims. The right of private judgment is, therefore, the first law of religious agents.

But the constitution of the Church of England, is incompatible with this right. The Church of England takes away the right of private judgment, and insists on the reception of prepared ‘creeds’ and ‘articles’ as the measure and rule of faith. It claims a ‘power to prescribe rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith.’ The Church of England allows no man to judge for himself, but usurps the authority of judging for him; and is therefore

* We recommend this death-bed scene, to the notice of Mr. Cunningham: it will form a pretty picture as a companion to Oliver Cromwell and his chaplain, in future editions of the “Velvet Cushion.”

a different Church from the Church of Jesus Christ. This is a far more important question than whether bishops are the Successors of the Apostles. It is a question which we earnestly recommend to the attention of all the conscientious members of the Established Church, whom it deeply concerns to examine the points in difference between these "Claims" and the principles of religious liberty advocated by Dissenters. Only let it be allowed, that the Bible is sufficient as the rule of faith and practice, that it was intended by its Divine Author as the sole guide to salvation, and was imparted in this character to all men—and the question is settled. The claims of all Established Churches, Popish and Protestant, Greek, and Latin, and English, are utterly invalidated; they are shewn to be usurpations of the most sacred rights of mankind—a part of that "mystery of iniquity" which the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. It becomes a momentous consideration, whether the requirements of God, and the duties which are owing to conscience, can best be displayed by continuing within their pale, or by coming out from them and being separate.

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